

Bridgelall relates to a scanning system of bar code symbols on an article moving at a given speed. The system detects an article at a determined position, and indicates a direction of bar code systems on an article by using an image camera. An optical beam is directed towards the position of the bar code symbol, and a signal corresponding to a reflecting light of the optical beam is generated. When the bar code is not correct, bar code symbols are scanned again.

In contrast, the claimed invention recites an image data input focus point control section which is used to control the focus point. The advantage of the focus point is a high resolution and the laser beam can obtain a clear image free of blurring. Also, the claimed device catches a direction of bar code symbols by an image camera, decides what optical beam should be directed which direction and directs the optical beam to bar code symbols precisely. Bridgelall does not teach or suggest these features of the claimed invention. Therefore, the claims are considered allowable over Bridgelall.

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C §103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 5,525,788 to Bridgelall *et al.* (Hereinafter "Bridgelall") in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,899,687 to Jones.

Applicant agrees with the Examiner's assertion that Bridgelall fails to teach means for reading two surfaces (front/side or back/side) of an article moved by a conveyor by fixing a focus on a position of the side surface and reading the side surface when receiving a bar code label on the side surface of the article from the image data input unit.

Jones relates to a scanning optical reader which illuminates and reads data from labels of items on a conveyor. The scanning optical reader of the Jones reference is positioned over or under the conveyor where as the device of claim 6 teaches either reading the front and side surface or the back and side surface. Jones clearly does not teach or suggest reading side surfaces of an article moved by the conveyor. Therefore, claim 6 is allowable over the combination of Bridgelall and Jones.

Claims 2-6 depend ultimately from respective independent claim 1 are, therefore, patentable for at least that reason. In addition, they recite other patentable features that are not taught or suggested by the relied-upon art, when considered as a whole.

Nishimura was used to reject claim 2, however it does not teach or suggest focus point control.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. An early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions regarding the application, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the local telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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